

PLATFORM MANNER



This paper is devoted to an area that is of critical importance to every trainer, how to give effective presentations. Many executives are first judged on their presentation style and then the content of their message. The object of this paper is not to make everyone a great presenter, that is impossible, but you will learn many do's and don'ts in effective presentations. We will concentrate extensively on speaking styles accompanied by the use of audiovisual methods, with emphasis on use of an LCD projector. Remember that for a trainer the ability to stand up and speak – lucidly, convincingly and sometimes persuasively – is a must at any meeting.

TIPS ON BEING EFFECTIVE

1. Control your information. Be sure of your facts. If this means research and analysis, then do it. Above all, you want your audience to perceive you as knowledgeable about your subject.
2. Release your nervous energy. Let it work for, not against you. Everyone is nervous before making a presentation. This is perfectly normal. But if properly channeled, nervousness can actually help you become a more effective presenter.
3. Forget planned gestures. Free, natural body movements will result when you concentrate on your message and on the persons to whom you are presenting. Further, concentration unblocks the nervous energy so that it can flow through to your audience.

4. You have something important to say. Say it with commitment. You would not have been asked to make a presentation unless someone thought you had a valuable contribution to make.
5. Be enthusiastic. No presenter was ever criticized for being too exciting. Your enthusiasm will lend conviction to your message.
6. Make eye contact with individuals in the audience – at least seconds per person. The old idea of “speaking to the back of the room” or letting your eyes sweep over the audience, from side to side, is now taboo.
7. Stand with your feet 12 inches apart, arms at side, as they come into play easily to emphasize what you are saying.
8. Use visuals whenever possible. More knowledge is gained and retained through seeing than hearing. Your visuals do not need to be elaborate. Your own matchstick drawings will frequently suffice, particularly before small, in-company meetings.
9. Control the ensuing “Question & Answer” period by rephrasing each question from your audience before you answer it. And if you do not know the answer, say so and offer to get it later for the questioner. Do not let a hostile, talky member of your audience take over your presentation.

ABOVE ALL

Rehearse your presentation. If you do not have recording equipment, then talk into a mirror – or to your spouse or admin. Listen to their reactions; correct your mistakes.

COMMON MISTAKES

This section will concentrate on a few of the common mistakes that unpracticed speakers make. In essence we can say that this section is a brief course in public speaking. There are some humorous visuals that follow.



The Mountain Climber – This fellow looks as if he were ascending the north face of the Matterhorn. He grips the podium for dear life and, probably, perspires visibly.

Remember, the more relaxed you appear to be, the more relaxed and receptive your audience will be.



The Moving Target – The opposite of The Mountain Climber, this fellow walks off his nervousness. Listening to him is like watching a tennis match. He detracts from his own talk and, more important, may well “walk himself” away from some of the principal points he planned to make.



The Great Orator – There is a place for the orator, the person who can build enthusiasm and sway crowds, in the business meeting, but oratory carried to an extreme rapidly produces boredom. Save your oratory for those occasions for which it is warranted.



The Musician – This fellow accomplishes his talk with a rendition on change, keys and so on in his trouser pockets...and in short order his audience is busy trying to recognize the tune he is playing instead of listening to him. Many practiced speakers take their change and keys out of their pockets before they approach the podium.



The Clinging Vine – This man's audience is likely to spend more time wondering whether he will have the strength to finish his talk than in listening to what he has to say.



The Bon Voyageur – This type reminds his audience of the man who took his mother-in-law to the dock to see her off on a six month cruise: he cannot wave good-bye hard enough. There is a place for gestures...but don't overdo them.



The Near Sighted Note Nibbler – Most speakers use notes...but the best ones don't like it. Usually, over reliance on notes simply means the speaker is ill prepared. But if he doesn't find his material important and interesting, why should his audience?



The Fumbler – The Fumbler, at the podium, is about as popular as the fumbler on the sporting field. A good many speakers now use visual aids regularly. Their first rule is: Know thy equipment.



The Preening Peacock – He never gets his tie quite straight or his coat adjusted or his hair smoothed to his satisfaction. Chances are he is nervous. Chances are that he doesn't know he is repeating these nervous gestures. But his audience knows it and his audience is distracted.



The Great Scientist – He may be a brilliant speaker. Unquestionably, he is as abstruse as he is brilliant: there may be only nine other men in the world who fully understand him – and none of these is in his audience. Translating “technicalese” into layman’s language is one of the toughest problems many speakers face today.



The Comedian – A joke is fine...but don’t begin to mistake yourself for a scintillating nightclub comedian.



The Deadly Sleeper – This person is simply dull. He sometimes looks as if he might drop off to sleep...and his audience does.



Black Dog Publishing Company

127 Longfields Way
Downingtown, PA 19335

Telephone (610) 269-0479
Fax (610) 269-0479
e-mail: NewWavePh@aol.com
www.salecallplanners.com

